

Nueces Estuary Advisory Council
April 20, 2011 TAMU–Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi, Texas

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Herman Settemeyer (TCEQ) and a roll call of members was completed.

The current membership of the Nueces Estuary Advisory Council (NEAC) was discussed. Two members had resigned since the last NEAC meeting (Hugh Vickers-Save Lake Corpus Christi and Jennifer Smith-Engle-Texas A&M Corpus Christi). Dr. Paul Zimba - Texas A&M Corpus Christi was elected to replace Jennifer Smith-Engle. The status of Save Lake Corpus Christi was to be investigated with the hope of getting a member to replace Mr. Vickers.

The vacancies at the Texas Department of Health, Commercial Bay Fishing Group, and Private Citizen were discussed. Mr. John S. Adams was elected to be the Private Citizen member. The member for the Commercial Bay Fishing Group is currently vacant and efforts will be made to find a representative. Regarding the Texas Department of Health, Herman Settemeyer reported contacting the Department but no response was received to indicate they wanted to participate on the NEAC. Also, Teresa Carrillo (Coastal Bend Bays Foundation) was elected to the NEAC. It appears both Teresa and Richard Bowers now are on the NEAC from the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation.

The membership of the City of Mathis - Mayor was discussed in regards to whether the membership was the Mayor or the individual. It was concluded by the NEAC that it was the Mayor and whoever was Mayor was the NEAC member.

Jace Tunnell, Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary Program gave a presentation on the Rincon Bayou Pipeline. He indicated the pipeline is complete and water pass through has occurred. Some pass through water has been “banked” to use when conditions are more favorable. The NEAC discussed and believed the “banked” water concept is allowable per of the adaptive management provisions of the agreed order and consent of the NEAC. The Inflow Pipeline Advisory Committee (IPAC) analyzes different scenarios and advises Corpus Christi of when inflows are needed. The NEAC voted to indorse the function of the IPAC.

Also discussed were the impacts of the pipeline inflows to the delta and to the bays. It is believed that the inflows are beneficial to the delta but are not large enough to benefit the bay. Mr. Tunnell also discussed the reaction of the salinity to pipeline flows and the issues associated with getting the water through the delta.

Rocky Fruend discussed the Watershed Protection Plan for the Nueces River below Lake Corpus Christi which Corpus Christi is funding the Nueces River Authority to complete. The project is to improve and protect water quality and habitat in the watershed below Lake Corpus Christi. It is hoped the plan will lead

to additional drinking water supplies, freshwater for the estuary, and prevent degradation.

The NEAC had a general discussion of the ongoing Nueces BBEST's efforts and the Agreed Order. The Senate Bill 3 environmental flow process will result in a report by the Nueces BBEST which will identify what is needed for a “sound ecological environment”. The Nueces BBASC will review the report and provide recommendations to the TCEQ. The TCEQ will then go through a public rule making process to adopt environmental flow standards. The standards will only apply to new water rights or water rights that are amended. The Agreed Order and its status were discussed. The Agreed Order is part of an existing water right and as such the NEAC thought it would be treated as an existing water right.

No public comment was presented.